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ABSTRACT

This leaflet contains a checklist of actions students should take to prepare for college. The checklist begins with the pre high school years, by advising selection of challenging courses and outlining ways to save for college. Ninth graders are again advised to select challenging courses and to begin to think about possible careers. It is suggested that 10th graders take challenging classes in core curriculum areas and begin to refine their possible career choices. Tenth graders should begin to think about the colleges they might choose and should take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Advice for 11th graders become more specific, and includes recommendations for taking college entrance examinations and more specific advice about choosing a college. Advice for 12th graders includes details about student financial aid. Some useful Web sites are listed, and telephone numbers are given for general information about financial aid. (SLD)

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College Preparation Checklist

Department of Education

2003-2004

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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STUDENT AID
We Help Put America Through School

COLLEGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

"In this great land called America, no child will be left behind."
President George W. Bush

2003-2004

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PRE - HIGH SCHOOL

- Take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, the arts and a foreign language.
- Develop strong study skills.
- Start thinking about which high school classes will best prepare you for college.
- If you have an opportunity to choose among high schools, or among different programs within one high school, investigate the options and determine which ones will help you –
  - Further your academic and career interests
  - Open doors to many future options
- Start saving for college if you haven't already. Investigate different ways to save:
  - Buy a U.S. Savings Bond
  - Open a savings account in a bank
  - Invest in mutual funds

HIGH SCHOOL - 9TH GRADE

- Take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, a foreign language, government, civics, economics and the arts.
- Get to know your career counselor or guidance counselor as well as other college resources available in your school.
- Talk to adults in a variety of professions to determine what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed for each kind of job.
- Continue to save for college.

HIGH SCHOOL - 10TH GRADE

- Take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, a foreign language, government, civics, economics and the arts.
- Talk to adults in a variety of professions to determine what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed for each kind of job.
- Become involved in school- or community-based extracurricular (before or after school) activities that interest you and/or enable you to explore career interests.
- Meet with your career counselor or guidance counselor to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). You must register early. If you have difficulty paying the registration fee, see your guidance counselor about getting a fee waiver.
- Take advantage of opportunities to visit colleges and talk to students.
- Continue to save for college.

HIGH SCHOOL - 11TH GRADE

- Take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, a foreign language, government, civics, economics and the arts.
- Meet with your career or guidance counselor to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Continue involvement in school- or community-based extracurricular activities.
- Decide which colleges most interest you. Contact them to request information and an application for admission. Ask about special admissions requirements, financial aid and deadlines.
- Talk to college representatives at college fairs.
- Visit colleges and talk to students.
- Consider people to ask for recommendations – teachers, counselors, employers, etc.
- Investigate the availability of financial aid from federal, state, local, and private sources. Talk to your guidance counselor for more information.
- Find out more about the domestic Peace Corps, called AmeriCorps, by calling 1-800-942-2677 (TTY 1-800-833-3722), or visiting www.americorps.org.
- Investigate the availability of scholarships provided by organizations such as corporations, labor unions, professional associations, religious organizations and credit unions.
- If applicable, go to the library and look for directories of scholarships for women, minorities and disabled students.
- Register for and take the SAT I, the ACT Assessment, SAT II Subject Tests or any other exams required for admission to the colleges you might want to attend. If you have difficulty paying the registration fee, see your guidance counselor about getting a fee waiver.
- Continue to save for college.

HIGH SCHOOL - 12TH GRADE

- Take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, a foreign language, government, civics, economics, the arts and advanced technologies.
- Meet with your counselor early in the year to discuss your plans.
- Complete all necessary financial aid forms, especially the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). Apply online at

  www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Write colleges to request information and applications for admission. Ask about financial aid, admissions requirements, and deadlines.
- If possible, visit the colleges that most interest you.
- Register for and take the SAT I, ACT Assessment, SAT II Subject Tests or any other exams required for admission to the colleges to which you are applying. If you have difficulty paying the registration fee, see your guidance counselor about getting a fee waiver.
- Prepare your application carefully. Follow the instructions, and PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DEADLINES! Be sure to ask your counselor and teachers at least two weeks before your application deadlines to submit the necessary documents to colleges (your transcript, letters of recommendation, etc.)

Excerpted from *Preparing Your Child For College.*

Useful Web Sites:

Federal Student Aid home page:

www.studentaid.ed.gov

The Student Guide (12th grade and beyond) and

Funding Your Education (before 12th grade) are available at this site.

FAFSA on the Web:

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Personal Identification Number (PIN):

www.pin.ed.gov

Federal government resources for education:

www.students.gov

General Information

Information about federal student aid programs, assistance with the application process and how to obtain federal student aid publications.

1-800-4-FED-AID

(1-800-433-3243)

TTY users 1-800-730-8913

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